

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed June 16, 2004. Claims 1-39 were pending in the Application. The Examiner rejects Claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-25, 27-34, and 36-39 and objects to Claims 6, 16, 26, and 35. Applicants amend independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 and cancel Claims 6, 16, 26, and 35 to place the Application in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objects to Claims 6, 16, 26, and 35 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but indicates that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the timely and favorable consideration of these claims.

To place the Application in condition for allowance in accordance with the Examiner's indications, Applicants amend independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 respectively to include the elements of Claims 6, 16, 26, and 35, which Applicants now cancel. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 now reflect originally submitted elements that the Examiner has indicated to be allowable, and the remaining claims all depend from allowable independent claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 7-11, 17-21, 27-31, and 36-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,719,871, which issued to Helm et al. ("*Helm*"). The Examiner also rejects Claims 1, 8-11, 18-21, 28-31, and 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,867,491, which issued to Derango, et al. ("*Derango*"). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of these claims based on *Helm* and *Derango* are obviated for the reasons discussed above and thus request withdrawal of these rejections. Although Applicants believe these claims without amendment are allowable over *Helm* and *Derango*, Applicants amend and cancel various

claims as discussed above to expedite issuance of this Application. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the original claims without amendment in copending and future applications.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects Claims 2-5, 12-15, 22-25, and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Helm* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,535,738, which issued to Bomar et al. ("*Bomar*"). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of these claims based on *Helm* in view of *Bomar* is obviated for the reasons discussed above and thus request withdrawal of this rejection. Although Applicants believe these claims without amendment are allowable over *Helm* in view of *Bomar*, Applicants amend and cancel various claims as discussed above to expedite issuance of this Application. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the original claims without amendment in copending and future applications.

Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any other fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
Attorneys for Applicants



Kurt M. Pankratz
Reg. No. 46,977

Date: Sep 14, 2004

Baker Botts L.L.P.
2001 Ross Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75201-2980
Tel. 214.953.6584

Customer Number **05073**